

Importance of family emphasized by circles

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NEW CREDIT — The round dance told the story behind this year's Three Fires Homecoming Powwow and Traditional Gathering.

A circle of native dancers surrounded an inner circle of visitors, symbolizing families in the largest circle of all, the human race.

Let the family circle be unbroken, said speaker Walter Cooke, who was host to a Saturday evening forum on the theme of family circles at New Credit's eighth annual powwow.

In the afternoon, Cooke urged all visitors join the round dance, and be welcomed by their hosts:

"If you live in a circle you have to respect that, respect all people. It all comes with the New Credit territory."

The dance provides a special invitation to those born out of Canada, then those born outside of Ontario, to link hands. It ends with visitors and hosts shaking hands as the two circles rotate opposite ways.

The powwow attracted about 3,000 people over two days.

Visitors of all ages enjoyed a friendly atmosphere, contests, food and craft booths and a traditional feast.

The gathering is named after the Three Fires treaty between the Ojibway, Pottawatomi and Odawa nations.

Heather Ashley, 11, was an experienced participant in the inter-tribal dance, which celebrates the peaceful coexistence of native peoples. She was among more than 100 dancers, but she didn't sit out many of the 10 traditional dances performed Saturday.



Brian Thompson, Expositor Staff

Wearing traditional dress, Ryan Burnham, 3, of R1 Ohsweken takes part in an inter-tribal dance Saturday at the Three Fires Powwow on the New Credit Reserve.

The Six Nations resident said she gets to every powwow she can. She tapped one foot to the

beat even as she sat to rest. Then, with a quick swig of her Pepsi, she was back in the circle.